

## DRAFT Screening Form for Low-Effect HCP Determination and NEPA Environmental Action Statement

### I. Project Information

- A. Project Name:** Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Proposed State Route 99/Cartmill Avenue Interchange Improvements Project, City of Tulare, Tulare County, California (State Route 99/Cartmill Avenue Interchange HCP)(HCP).
- B. Affected Species:** San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), federally listed as endangered, and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), federally listed as threatened.
- C. Project Size:** The proposed Permit Area is 219 acres. The 219-acre Permit Area is comprised of a 54.32-acre project construction area, and an adjacent 164.58-acre area of potential indirect effects that surrounds the project construction area.
- D. Brief Project Description:** The applicant's proposed project would improve the State Route 99/Cartmill Avenue interchange and correct nonstandard features of the existing Cartmill Avenue overpass. The proposed project would replace the existing overpass constructed in the 1950s to improve safety, relieve traffic congestion, improve east-west traffic circulation, and improve local access to State Route 99. The new Cartmill Avenue overpass would provide 16.5 feet of vertical clearance over State Route 99, compared to the existing 15 feet, and provide additional space to accommodate future widening of State Route 99. A 2,700-foot long overpass-section of Cartmill Avenue would be widened from two lanes (38 feet wide) to become a six-lane divided arterial (128 feet wide). An existing frontage road (Road 100) in the northeast quadrant of the Interchange would be removed, and a new roadway (Akers Street) would be constructed in an area approximately 330 feet to the east of the existing frontage road. The new Cartmill Avenue overpass would transition from six lanes to the existing two lanes in 1) a 1,300-foot section east of a new Akers Street intersection, and in 2) a 400-foot section west of the existing M Street intersection. The existing M Street and Cartmill Avenue intersection would be improved, and a portion of M Street would be reconstructed. An existing highway ramp in the southwest quadrant of the Interchange would be removed, realigned, and replaced with a new highway ramp. Three additional highway ramps would be constructed in other Interchange quadrants. Seven additional 12-inch-deep water detention basins would be excavated. The entire project would be constructed in a single phase. HCP covered-activities also include actions to restore lands temporarily disturbed by construction activities, and the operation and maintenance of the restored areas.

**Proposed permit term:** The proposed permit duration for the HCP is 5 years. Project construction is expected to take approximately 1 year and is expected to begin in March 2013. The City's mitigation obligation—purchase of credits at approved conservation

banks—would be fulfilled prior to construction. On-site mitigation measures, involving species avoidance and minimization measures as well as the restoration of temporary-disturbance sites, would be carried out prior to, during, and immediately following construction. The proposed 5-year permit term, expected to end in March 2018, is therefore sufficient to include the duration of all covered activities (purchase of conservation credits, one year of construction, restoration of the construction site, and maintenance of restoration plantings), with some additional time allowed in case unforeseen circumstances result in construction delays.

**Land cover, species occupation, and species baseline.** Approximately 128 acres of the 219-acre Permit Area are currently agricultural lands (i.e., row crops, orchards, and some fallow fields). Approximately 45 acres, mostly along State Route 99 and Cartmill Avenue, are ruderal grassland land-cover and dominated by weedy plants and non-native annual grasses. Developed lands—including road surfaces, buildings, and parking lots—cover approximately 37 acres of the Permit Area. Existing irrigation ditches cross approximately 0.7 acre of the Permit Area. Five existing water-detention basins occupy 5.5 acres and hold water year-round. Three seasonal pools are present within the Permit Area, but only one degraded seasonal pool supports potential habitat for vernal pool fairy shrimp (pool SP-1). Protocol wet-season surveys of this seasonal-pool did not observe listed brachiopod-species, but dry-season sampling was inconclusive—consequently, the applicant assumed the 0.071-acre degraded seasonal-pool to be occupied by vernal pool fairy shrimp. The Permit Area is located within the current range of San Joaquin kit fox. Together, the agricultural lands and ruderal annual grasslands within the Permit Area total approximately 173 acres of low-quality habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox. However, no large areas of grassland or other natural vegetation remain within 10 miles of the Permit Area boundaries. The Permit Area is currently surrounded on three sides by agricultural lands (i.e., row crops and orchards), with dense residential development to the southwest. Surveys of the Permit Area observed numerous ground-squirrel burrows large enough for use by San Joaquin kit fox (at least 3 inches in diameter), but none showed tracks, scat, prey remains, or other indication of past or current use by San Joaquin kit fox. In addition, all burrows are located in small patches of ruderal grassland, and all are adjacent to busy roads.

**Minimization and mitigation plan:** The biological goals of this low-effect HCP are to: 1) avoid or minimize direct impacts to vernal pool fairy shrimp and San Joaquin kit fox, 2) provide for the continuing protection and existence of vernal pool fairy shrimp and San Joaquin kit fox in Tulare County, and 3) contribute to a regional preserve design by purchasing mitigation credits at Service-approved species conservation banks. HCP avoidance and minimization measures include compliance with our January 2011 document *“U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standard Recommendations for Protection of the Endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance.”* Other avoidance and minimization measures include but are not limited to: (1) installing barrier fencing around the entire work area; (2) installing barrier fences around seasonal pools and other sensitive areas; (3) installing erosion control measures around all seasonal pools; (4) implementing actions to avoid migratory birds and active bird nests; (5) conducting environmental awareness training for onsite personnel; (6) conducting

preconstruction surveys for kit fox and kit fox dens; (7) implementing measures to avoid and minimize the introduction of invasive weeds; (8) employing a qualified biological monitor to be on site during all initial ground-disturbing construction activities, to revisit the construction site at least weekly to assure that all avoidance and minimization measures are in good working order, and to prepare monitoring reports; and (9) the biological monitor will have the authority to stop work, if deemed necessary. In addition to on-site monitoring before and during construction, the project area will be visited annually by the City or its consultant after the restoration is complete, to monitor and evaluate the long-term success of the restoration. Annual monitoring and reports will continue for the length of the permit term (5 years).

The applicant will mitigate for the direct and indirect permanent loss of 36.44 acres of low-quality foraging habitat and the temporary loss of 12.24 acres of low-quality foraging habitat for San Joaquin kit fox by purchasing preservation credits equal to 58.73 acres of high-quality kit fox breeding and foraging habitat at Wildlands' Kreyenhagen Hills Conservation Bank (a Service-approved conservation bank in Fresno County). The City will mitigate for the direct permanent loss of 0.071 acre of vernal pool fairy shrimp suitable-habitat by purchasing preservation credits equal to 0.213 acre of occupied vernal-pool habitat at Wildlands' Deadman Creek Conservation Bank, a Service-approved conservation bank in Merced County. In addition, the applicant will salvage the top 3-4 inches of soil from the 0.071-acre pool (pool SP-1) containing resting cysts of the versatile fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lindahli*), a non-listed species, and place the soil within retention basin "H" once it is constructed. The biological monitor will be onsite to monitor the removal of the topsoil and will check to make sure that the soil is properly covered during periodic monitoring visits to the project site. Upon completion of retention basin "H," the stored topsoil from SP-1 would be spread over the bottom of the basin prior to the start of the winter rainy season.

## **II. Does the HCP fit the following Department of Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service categorical-exclusion criteria?**

### **A. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on federally listed, proposed, or candidate species and their habitats covered under the HCP, prior to implementation of the minimization and mitigation measures?**

Yes. The effects on both HCP covered-species would be minor or negligible prior to the implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. A total of 12.24 acres of low-quality San Joaquin kit fox habitat would be temporarily disturbed during construction, and a total of 26.73 acres would be converted to roadway or road shoulder. An additional 9.71 acres in the southwest portion of the Permit Area would become permanently inaccessible to San Joaquin kit fox. However, the affected San Joaquin kit fox habitat within the Permit Area is already fragmented, found primarily in narrow patches adjacent to busy roadways, and dominated by ruderal plants and non-native grasses. In addition, no larger blocks of grassland habitat are located within 10 miles of the Permit Area. The Permit Area is surrounded by agricultural fields (i.e. row-

crops, orchards, and fallow fields) or dense residential-development. Therefore, the potential for San Joaquin kit fox to use the Permit Area for either foraging or denning is relatively low under the existing conditions. In addition, State Route 99, a busy highway, bisects the Permit Area. San Joaquin kit fox movements across the Permit Area are already highly restricted by heavy traffic and the dense oleander shrubs located in the center-divide of highway. Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposed interchange improvements would affect existing San Joaquin kit fox dispersal and movement patterns within this region of the species' range. Consequently, we conclude that project effects to San Joaquin kit fox would be negligible and minor, prior to implementation of the HCP minimization and mitigation measures.

The project will also remove a small, 0.071-acre seasonal pool (pool SP-1) located in a narrow strip of ruderal grassland between Cartmill Avenue and an existing highway ramp. This pool may be the remnant of a natural pool, but was likely modified or created during the construction of State Route 99. The soils surrounding this pool are non-hydric and do not include a subsurface restrictive layer. The pool is shallow, hydrologically isolated, and frequently disturbed by road maintenance actions under the existing conditions. No listed branchiopod species were observed during protocol-level wet season surveys, but the versatile fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lindahli*), was observed in this pool. However, soil samples collected during a protocol-level dry season survey contained tens to thousands of cysts of the genus *Branchinecta*. The cysts most closely resembled cysts of two non-listed *Branchinecta* species [the versatile fairy shrimp and the alkali fairy shrimp (*B. mackini*)], but a positive identification of all cysts could not be made. Because the dry-season survey results were inconclusive, the applicant will assume the pool is occupied by vernal pool fairy shrimp. HCP effects to this small, low-quality seasonal pool would have a negligible effect on vernal pool fairy shrimp.

**B. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on all other components of the human environment, including environmental values and environmental resources (e.g. air quality, geology and soils, water quality and quantity, socio-economic, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, etc.), prior to implementation of the minimization and mitigation measures?**

Yes. Effects on all other components of the human environment are also minor or negligible. A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project and circulated for public review. The analysis in this CEQA document determined that Visual Resources was the only other component of the human environment the project could impact, but any visual impacts would be less-than-significant. The Service independently reviewed all analysis presented in the CEQA document, and we concurred that potential effects of HCP implementation on all other components of the human environment are either minor or negligible, and no effects are significant.

**C. Would the incremental impacts of this HCP, considered together with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions (regardless of what**

**agency or person undertakes such other actions) not result, over time, in a cumulative effect to the human environment (the natural and physical environment) which would be considered significant?**

Yes. The CEQA document analyzed the cumulative effects of the proposed project on all components of the human environment (including Land Use, Recreation, Urban Growth, Farmlands, Community Cohesion, Utilities, Emergency Services, Traffic, Transportation, Visual/Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Hydrology, Floodplains, Water Quality, Geology, Paleontology, Hazardous Materials, Air Quality, Noise, Ground Vibration, Plant Communities, Wetlands, Animal Species, and Invasive Species), and concluded that the incremental impacts of the project, considered together with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions) would not result, over time, in significant cumulative impacts to any component of the human environment.

**III. Do any of the exceptions to categorical exclusions (extraordinary circumstances) listed in 43 CFR 46.215 apply to this HCP?**

**Would implementation of the HCP:**

**A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?**

No. Implementation of the HCP would not result in significant adverse effects to public health or safety. The proposed interchange improvements would remove existing safety concerns with the existing highway overpass and enhance traffic safety. In addition, the M-Street intersection improvements add additional turn lanes and new lighting to increase public safety at that intersection.

**B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as: historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990) or floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds, or other ecologically significant or critical areas?**

No. A cultural resources survey of the HCP Permit Area included in the CEQA document indicated that there are no historic buildings or archaeological sites within the proposed project area limits. However, there is always the potential that unknown cultural resources could be uncovered during project construction. The CEQA document states that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) construction standard-measures require that work stop in case of inadvertent discovery of archaeological or human remains. These standard-measures ensure no cultural resources would be significantly impacted by implementation of the HCP.

National parks or refuge lands are not located within the HCP Permit Area or the surrounding area. One city park, Blain Park, is in the project vicinity next to State Route 99 and approximately one mile south of Cartmill Avenue. This park is operated by the Tulare Parks and Recreation District and includes play equipment, picnic areas, multi-purpose fields, a walking path, and a fitness course for the disabled. The implementation of the HCP would not directly or indirectly affect recreation at Blain Park. National monuments, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, or national natural landmarks are not located within the HCP Permit Area or in the surrounding area.

Implementation of the HCP could not deplete groundwater supplies, interfere with groundwater recharge, affect aquifer volume, lower the local groundwater table, or affect a sole or principal drinking-water aquifer. Technical studies completed for the CEQA document indicate that the Permit Area is not located in a 100-year floodplain; consequently, HCP implementation could not result in significant encroachment or impact to a floodplain.

Approximately two-thirds of the HCP Permit Area is located in a rural area with farmlands. Most undeveloped parcels north of Cartmill Avenue have been designated as prime agricultural farmland. However, even though the California Department of Conservation designated these areas as important farmland, it does not necessarily mean the land is currently farmed. For example, an ARCO AM/PM gasoline station is located north of Cartmill Avenue and west of State Route 99 is located on designated prime farmland. The proposed interchange improvement project would directly convert a maximum of 56 acres of designated prime farmland to nonagricultural uses, and would indirectly convert a maximum of 17.3 acres of Prime and/or Unique Farmland to nonagricultural use (73.3 acres total converted). None of the affected farmland-acres are designated as Statewide or Locally Important. The maximum reduction of farmland (73.3 acres) represents only 0.00008 percent of the total farmland in Tulare County, which is negligible within the context of available farmland within the County. Due to the large amount of land available for agricultural purposes in the immediate project vicinity and in the surrounding counties, the small amount of acreage that would be permanently removed from agricultural production would not affect total agricultural production in the area. In addition, implementation of the HCP would not affect any parcels currently under Williamson Act contract. The proposed project would not include uses incompatible with adjacent farmland, as the project would remove and replace an existing-use roadway that is presently compatible with agricultural uses in the area.

A preliminary wetland delineation of the Permit Area was submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) (see HCP Appendix E). The three seasonal pools present within in the Permit Area boundary showed positive indicators of wetland hydrology, but not of hydrophytic vegetation or hydric soils. The origin of the 0.071-acre seasonal pool (pool SP-1) is undetermined, but the other two seasonal pools are known to be man-made or highly modified. Through the preliminary jurisdictional determination process, the Corps has verified that all three pools are not jurisdictional wetlands, and therefore would not be subject to regulation under Clean Water Act Section 404. The Corps did take jurisdiction over the two irrigation ditches that cross the Permit Area because they drain

to the Tulare Lake Bed, a tributary of natural waters. The City of Tulare will obtain a Nationwide Permit from the Corps prior to project construction, which will assure that the implementation of the HCP does not result in significant impacts to wetland resources.

Implementation of the HCP would not cause significant impacts to migratory birds or to other ecologically significant or critical areas. As discussed in the HCP's conservation strategy (see HCP Chapter 5), avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented prior to and during construction to avoid significant impacts to northern harrier, white-tailed kite, western burrowing owl, and other migratory birds that could be present within the HCP Permit Area. These avoidance and minimization measures include but are not limited to: 1) removing trees and shrubs during the non-breeding season; 2) conducting preconstruction nest surveys; 3) conducting surveys for burrowing owls and implementing the mitigation methods in California Department of Fish and Game guidelines, if necessary; 4) conducting preconstruction survey for swallow nests and implement measures to deter new nesting; 5) conducting preconstruction surveys for Swainson's hawk nests; and 6) restoring habitat in disturbed areas to avoid introduction of invasive plant species.

**C. Have highly controversial environmental effects (defined at 43 CFR 46.30), or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [see NEPA section 102(2)(E)]?**

No. The HCP would implement a relatively common interchange improvement project. There is no substantial dispute as to the environmental consequences of constructing the proposed interchange improvements—the effects of implementing the HCP are undisputed. In addition, the HCP document has studied, developed, and described appropriate alternatives, and there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of the available resources.

**D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects, or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?**

No. There are no highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects associated with implementing the HCP. Implementing the HCP will not involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

**E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?**

No. The HCP would implement a relatively common interchange improvement project, and would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

**F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?**

No. The proposed State Route 99/Cartmill Avenue interchange-improvements have independent utility, and do not have a direct relationship to any other action, including any actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. The interchange improvements were designed to correct features of the 1950s Cartmill Avenue overcrossing that do not meet existing structural standards, and those existing standards accommodate a future widening of State Route 99. The future widening of State Route 99 was considered during project design only to avoid constructing an overpass that could soon be obsolete, but the interchange-improvements and the future widening of State Route 99 are not interdependent or interrelated.

Similarly, the interchange improvements were designed to accommodate existing traffic, as well as anticipated future-traffic (Tulare County Association of Governments, 2010). As a transportation project, the State Route 99 Cartmill Avenue interchange improvements were designed with consideration of future urban development. However, the interchange-improvement project is independent of such development, and no proposed future-development project relies on the interchange improvements. Furthermore, the State Route 99/Cartmill overpass improvement is not a component of a larger development project, and it does not depend on a larger development projects for its justification.

**G. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places?**

No. A Historical Resources Compliance Report and Historic Resources Evaluation Report prepared for the project in December 2011 (see HCP Appendix F) identified one historic-age structure, the Tulare Irrigation Canal Segment-Liberty Ditch within the HCP's Permit Area. The Liberty Ditch has been evaluated and recommended not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (see HCP Appendix F). The existing 1950's Cartmill Avenue bridge was previously evaluated as part of the California Department of Transportation bridge inventory, and was not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**H. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?**

No. Although the proposed project may result in the incidental take of San Joaquin kit fox and vernal pool fairy shrimp, the amount and degree of take is not significant, and would result in only minor or negligible effects to the persistence of the species (as explained in Section II.A above). This finding will be evaluated in further detail by the Service's intra-service consultation conducted under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. No designated critical habitat for San Joaquin kit fox or vernal pool fairy shrimp occurs within the HCP Permit Area.

**I. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law, or a requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.**

No. Implementation of the HCP would not threaten to violate any federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

**J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).**

No. The project would not affect residential properties; thus, implementation of the HCP would not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations.

**K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).**

No. Native American coordination was conducted in support of the cultural resources study, and correspondence can be found in the Archaeological Survey Report (see HCP Appendix F). The applicant contacted the Native American Heritage Commission in November 2008, and a search of its sacred lands database and list of Native American representatives for the Permit Area were requested. The sacred lands database search was negative, and a list of six Native American representatives or groups was received. The applicant sent letters to Native American representatives on December 8, 2008, and telephone calls followed. One return call was received from Mr. John Sartuche of the Wukchumni Tribe. Mr. Sartuche did not have any specific concerns, but requested to be kept informed of the project's progress.

**L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).**

No. Field surveys conducted for the CEQA document found seventeen plant species in the HCP Permit Area that are classified by the state of California as invasive plant species. Most of these invasive weeds occurred in the ruderal annual grassland land-cover and along the edges of the agricultural land-cover. With the exception of yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), these seventeen species have limited or moderate rates of invasion and dispersal. As discussed in the CEQA document, the applicant will assure construction activities do not contribute to the introduction, the continued existence, or the spread of noxious weed by implementing the following avoidance and minimization measures during and after project construction: (1) educate construction supervisors and managers on the importance of controlling and preventing the spread of noxious weed infestations; (2) coordinate with the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner and/or the Tulare Weed Management Area to ensure that the appropriate best management practices are implemented for the duration of project construction; (3) treat small, isolated

infestations with eradication methods that have been approved by or developed in conjunction with the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner and/or Tulare Weed Management Area to prevent and/or destroy viable plant parts or seed; (4) minimize surface disturbance to the greatest extent feasible when implementing construction activities; (5) use certified, weed-free, imported erosion-control materials (e.g. rice straw); (6) use native, noninvasive species, or non-persistent hybrids in erosion-control plantings to stabilize site conditions and to prevent invasive species from colonizing. Upon completion of construction, all areas of temporary ground disturbance (including storage and equipment-staging areas, temporary roads, and areas where existing road or structures were removed, etc.) will be re-contoured, if necessary. As required by the HCP conservation strategy, (see HCP Chapter 5), all temporarily disturbed areas, except the staging area, will be hydroseeded, broadcast seeded, or drill-seeded depending on specific site conditions with native, noninvasive species, or with non-persistent hybrids to restore plant cover to prevent colonization by noxious weeds. Restoration of the temporarily disturbed areas will be completed within one year from the date the construction phase ends. The staging area will revert to crop-field or other agricultural uses. An initial post-construction monitoring report will be submitted to the Service within 60 days following completion of project construction and site-restoration activities. In addition to the initial post-construction monitoring report, the City of Tulare will survey the project site annually, and will prepare an annual letter report that describes the effectiveness of the restoration covered-activities. Annual monitoring and annual reports will continue for the length of the permit term (5 years). If drought, fire, flood, or another changed circumstance adversely affects the restoration plantings, the City will re-seed the affected area.

#### **IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT**

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record.

Based on the information and analysis above, the proposed Incidental Take Permit for the State Route 99-Carmill Avenue Interchange HCP qualifies for a categorical exclusion, as defined in 40 CFR 1508.4 and in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook* (November 1996). Furthermore, no extraordinary circumstances identified in 43 CFR 46.215 exist for the proposed State Route 99-Carmill Avenue Interchange HCP. Therefore, the Service's permit action for the State Route 99-Carmill Avenue Interchange HCP is categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation, as provided by 40 CFR 1507.3; 43 CFR 46.205; 43 CFR 46.215; 516 DM 3; 516 DM 8.5; and 550 FW 3.3C. A more extensive NEPA process is unwarranted, and no further NEPA documentation will be made.

#### Other supporting documents:

City of Tulare. 2012. *Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Proposed State Route 99-Carmill Avenue Interchange Improvements Project, City of Tulare, Tulare*

County, California. October. Prepared for the City of Tulare by ICF International, Sacramento, California (ICF 06890.06).

California Department of Transportation and City of Tulare. 2012. *State Route 99/Cartmill Avenue Interchange Improvements CEQA Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration*, 06-TUL-99-31.3/32.6, Project ID 06-0000-0368. August. California Department of Transportation, Fresno and Tulare, California.

Tulare County Association of Governments. 2010. *2011 Regional Transportation Plan for Tulare County*. Seventeenth Edition. Final. July 19. Tulare County Association of Governments, Tulare, California.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1996. *Endangered Species Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook*. November. Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. *Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance*. January. Prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office. Sacramento, California.

Signature Approval:

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Susan K. Moore  
Field Supervisor  
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office

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Date